

Sitka Historical Society
Museum Committee
5 December 2011, Meeting Notes

Attendees: Patricia Alexander/ Society Board VP, Ernestine Massey/Society Board Treasurer, Marilyn Knapp/Retired Curator, Mike Reif/Assembly Member, Bob Medinger/Society/Museum Executive Director, Martha Schoenthal/Pre-D Project Manager, Jacqueline Fernandez/Museum Curator.

Via Telephone: John Stein/Society Board President, Scott Carlee/Curator of State Museum Services, Mary Pat Wyatt/Pre-D Museum Consultant

After introductions, Bob gave a short status report of the activities of the Centennial Hall Feasibility Committee and the Assembly action. The Assembly has voted to go forward with the C7 plan presented. Mike reported that the parking lot makeover will be the first project. The entire Centennial Hall project is not fully funded; the City may wait another year for additional funding. Commencement of the museum project may need to wait full funding of the Centennial Hall project.

Martha reviewed the highlights from the last meeting on 14 November, noting the review of Mary Pat's draft report, the review of the different estimates etc.

Mary Pat explained there were really only subtle changes to the final of her report. The number of objects needing to be accessioned has been updated; the square footages clarified. There was some discussion about archives vs. facsimiles of important documents via Marilyn. The matrix of museums around the state was discussed. It would be helpful for the matrix to note which communities host cruise ship visitors. Mary Pat noted that of the list of statewide museums reviewed for the study, many had just recently entered new facilities, or are in the process of new construction and design of facilities. Sitka's museum is now in nearly its 42nd year at Centennial. Museum signage was also discussed as an important item for the new museum, including appropriate road signs pointing visitors to the museum.

Several budget documents were distributed. The first was a crosswalk between the FY12 Budget and the recommended budget in Mary Pat's report. Several items may have been dropped in the recommended budget; these were added back and highlighted. They were minor amounts totally less than \$5k. This budget did not include the facility operating costs.

Martha and Bob discussed a notional timeline for the project. Should state funding be approved in June/July 2012, the earliest, realistic opening date would be in the spring of 2015. This could get pushed back depending upon funding for the Centennial Hall project.

Tentative Assumptions:

- Legislature Approves Funding of \$4.1 million Spring of 2012
- Governor approves funding allocation Summer of 2012
- Architectural and Engineering Firms Hired October 2012
- Construction Bids Solicited June-August 2013
- Construction Contract Awarded September 2013
- Construction Phase Oct. 2013 – Oct. 2014

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| ○ Building Completed | Nov/Dec 2014 |
| ○ Permanent Exhibits Installed | Jan. – April, 2015 |
| ○ Grand Opening | Spring / Summer 2015 |

The budget spreadsheet showed how the Society could ramp up the personnel (half time archivist and two interns) in FY2013 and FY2014, focusing on accessioning the collections. In FY2015, when the new facility was being commissioned and opening, is when the full budget would need implementation.

The facility operating costs were discussed. Martha explained that the data did not exist to project the museum costs. Based upon discussions with Michael Harmon, it was decided to use the projected operating costs for the new library as a good template for the new museum. These numbers were felt to be conservative (on the high end). To use those numbers, the costs of the janitorial services would need to be backed out. This resulted in an incremental increase of about \$24,000 in operating costs and a total of \$39,000.

Martha explained that utilities costs for new facilities were usually higher due to fresh air requirements. The use of ground source heat pumps' was more efficient, but that she couldn't calculate it. There was also discussion about current standards regarding humidity control in museums.

There was discussion regarding the budget for permanent exhibits. Marilyn reported that the \$1.45m estimate was low to moderate. The cost could be as much as \$1.75 depending upon how much interactive electronics were wanted. Fund-raising for the permanent exhibits should begin only after the funding for the facility was secured.

With regard to the space program, concerns were again expressed about the amount of storage available in the proposed space program. It was pointed out that the White House should be used for long-term storage of materials that were not immediately needed at the museum. The Museum Committee agreed to adopt the 5800 square foot space program. The next step was to engage the services of the architect to develop a concept design.

Strengths and Challenges of the project were discussed. The strengths were identified as follows:

- Premium site designated by the community
- Legislative funding request for facility construction
- Good awareness and support from the community and city assembly
- Dedicated staff and Board of Directors
- Good Coordination efforts between City & Society on the project and cost savings to be realized as a wing of Centennial Hall.

Challenges that the project faces are:

- General state of the economy
- Sustainability

Martha noted that the operating cost estimates probably need further refinement from Bob. The next meeting will most likely be set after the beginning of the year and the architect will be working on conceptual drafts of space allocations. Bob and Martha will coordinate the dates.